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OBSERVATIONS

(Continued from Page 1)

statement came clearly from the heart and not solely from the head. The same decent impulses, however misguided, which dictated the institution of the magazine, leading him inadvertently into a colossal mistake, served to correct the error. We trust that his apology to the Jews and the world has fallen on fertile soil—that something more than lip forgiveness will blossom from his plea for pardon.

SHAMEFULLY, America must plead guilty to the indictment returned by Charles H. Cheney, Los Angeles city planner, that nine tenths of the buildings in our cities are ugly, yet all may take hope from his promise that something actually is being done about it. Architectural monstrosities which blight American urban centers are already drawing hot fire, and sharpshooters of the onslaught inform us that the strong arm of police power which now prohibits unsafe structures may yet prevent erection of buildings which offend the eye.

Speaking before the National Conference on City Planning, Mr. Cheney declared that "in fifty years more than half of the buildings in most of our cities will be torn down . . . because their exterior appearance ruins the value of the street." If this be true, ugliness is not only a shock to the finer sensibilities, but a drain on the purse, which, when generally recognized, may cause its prohibition by custom and court. It is heartening to read so bold a prophecy from a man whose experience in the realm of planning brings weight to his convictions; along with the fervor of the advocate, signs seem to indicate that the vision he fashions may sometime be fulfilled.

Already zoning laws, recognizing aesthetic values and guaranteeing protection against neighborhood depreciation by buildings out of keeping with established environment, have been widely upheld by courts. Zoning insures that a well-designed home shall not be blighted by a hot-dog stand next door. It does not, however, concern itself with ugliness, but merely defines uses to which buildings in certain districts may be put. As yet there is no legal deterrent to shoddy and off-color buildings.

In widely scattered districts, however, the movement to insure architectural beauty is taking form. Numerous first-class subdivisions are being developed upon a plan by which attractive environment is guaranteed by contract. Under such a scheme the buyer covenants to recognize veto powers of an art jury, and agrees not to construct a plant which shrubs until his plans have been approved. The agreement is written into sales contracts and deeds, binding the buyer's heirs and assigns.

Public control of private building design, however, is quite another matter, although it has been attempted in one instance with notable results: After the earthquake of 1925 Santa Barbara officials enacted an ordinance providing that no building permit would be issued until plans had been approved by a duly constituted board of architects. Under this measure Santa Barbara reared a new city of beauty upon the ruins of the old. Estrada, the principal business street, is now one of the loveliest commercial thoroughfares in the entire United States.

Altogether more than 2,000 permits were issued before the knights-errant of beauty ran headlong into politics and were unhorsed. The ordinance was repealed, but, as Mr. Cheney points out, even politics could not destroy the architectural loveliness which it made possible. The experience of the California city proves that beauty wins an economic advantage. Before the earthquake Santa Barbara was a playground. Now, in addition to attracting tourists to the benisons of California sunshine, it is a shrine for worshippers of architectural excellence. Business men, prohibited under the ordinance from erecting unsightly signs, now refrain from setting them up, even though the restraint has been removed. They have discovered that the sheer beauty of their buildings is their best enticement to customers—that the spiritual value of loveliness is also a commercial asset.

No court has yet been called upon to decide the legality of strict architectural control under police power, but the trend of decisions in zoning litigation is plainly toward recognition of aesthetic values. An opinion by the Minnesota Supreme court is typical. Ruling in a zoning case, the court held that "giving people a means to secure . . . fit and harmonious surroundings promotes contentment, induces further efforts to enhance the appearance and value of the home, fosters civic pride and thus tends to produce a better type of citizens. It is time that the courts recognize the aesthetic as a factor in life."

The way of the idealists after beauty in architecture is hard. Before courts will concede the right of cities to control building design, public demand for such revolutionary restrictions must be reared by patient education. The enemies of the cause are movement, greed, and warped conceptions of what constitutional liberty connotes. However, it seems as unjust to jar a man's sensibilities with an eyesore, to depreciate his property by surrounding it with ugliness, as it is to strike him with a club or steal his goods. Some day, indeed, the courts may recognize that crimes against the senses should be prohibited by the same agencies which now protect body and purse. At all events, it is gratifying to learn from the record of the National Conference on City Planning that beauty has its active as well as its idle champions—that city planners generally are cautiously but certainly directing their fire against ugliness. They have our enthusiastic support.

(Republished from The Independent, Boston)

HERBERT A. L. FISHER, warden of New College, Oxford, and trustee of the Rhodes fund, declares that Rhodes scholars as a whole are failures. He grounds his conclusion on the fact that almost no Rhodes scholars have won eminence after leaving Oxford, and points that only one—President Aydelotte of Swarthmore—has gained international fame. In a measure the warden may be right. It is difficult to designate many ex-Rhodes scholars who have made high marks in American life, but it must be remembered that the old Rhodes man cannot now be more than fifty-five, and few mortals are at that age in the prime of life. If Mr. Fisher's indictment is actually justified, the fault seems to lie in the system by which Rhodes men are designated. He who would win the award must be at once a scholar, a leader, and an athlete. He must be versatile to a degree—and, in the light of the reported failures, possibly even to a fault. The system is premised on the assumption that youthful versatility connotes many greatness. Lads of unique excellence in a particular pursuit, but inert in others, do not ride free through Oxford. This groundwork of the Rhodes theory may be faulty. How many great poets ever displayed the youthful quality of leadership, as the world counts it? How many renowned scientists or philosophers ever ran the hundred in ten flat? If the charge of failure by Rhodes men stands, it is possible that many-sidedness in youth presages future mediocrity rather than future eminence. This is an intricately organized planet on which the laurels more and more bedeck the brows of those who pay strict attention to a particular specialty. Possibly the world would be better served and Cecil Rhodes' dream come more nearly true if Oxford scholarships were awarded to lads with definite skill in limited fields. The versatility now demanded in each individual might then be more easily attained for society through the combined talents of many well-trained specialists.

(Republished from The Independent, Boston)

NEVER in the memory of the oldest voter has a summer preceding a session of Congress given such promise of rip-roaring ruction in the House and Senate as that which conditions political now guarantee for next December. There have been warm scraps in Washington in years just before Presidential elections. There have been some colossal clashes in the Senate. And we have watched with misgivings while the House dipped into juicy barrels of pork. But never before has the nation faced a session of Congress under such a combination of agitating circumstances as now prevail. A President threatens to run for a third term. That would start a good Congressional scrap any time. The two parties will be almost tied in the Senate, in itself a situation conducive to warm moments. The coffers of the treasury are fat with the most enticing surplus in the history of the country. And that alone would always start hot fires in the House. But put them all in the pot together, let them simmer from July to December, and then serve them up to the boys in the Senate and the House. If that isn't a recipe to make all the historic fighters of Congress turn over in their tombs, then Nicholas Longworth is a Democrat. No sooner will Mr. Dawes rap for order in the Senate than the disorder will begin. With both eyes on 1928 Jim Reed and his Democratic cohorts will open fire on Vane and Smith and the Republican "frauds" by which these men rode to the Senate. The contest over their seating is destined to shake the ceiling of the chamber as it has seldom been shaken before. And no matter how the battle ends, when the smoke has cleared away the Senate forces will be off to the next hot scrap, for plenty more will be waged. Meanwhile, the House will be swept by politically inspired emotions as partisan mouthpieces charge opponents with favoritism in tax-reduction proposals. Representatives from the port and river towns where dredging programs demand appropriations, and from districts where a few new postoffices would nullify a goodly number of votes, will turn greedy eyes toward the \$600,000,000 surplus, while others from desert areas will fix themselves for all time with the folks back home by standing stalwartly against the threatening deprivations of the pork-barrel contingent.

In both branches there will be merry set-toes over farm relief, the matter of levees and spillways for the Mississippi, taxes, appropriations, army and navy, and an on ad infinitum. But over and above everything else Congress will be thinking in terms of politics.

'Our Gang' Headliner at Orpheum With Rascals in Person

"Our Gang" has been a bell ringer on the screen for sometime and in the last two weeks it has turned loose a whole flock of gones and cracked all sorts of house records for attendance at the Orpheum in San Francisco and Oakland. With these honors, which are usually accorded only to seasoned headliners Hal Roach's screen rascals are coming to the Orpheum Sunday matinee, July 24. Every mischievous youngster belonging to the screen funsters will appear in the specially written sketch "Acting Out." There will be Joe Cobb, the fat boy; Farina, the dark-complexioned fun-maker; Jay R. Smith, Mammy, Jean Darling, Harry Spear and Jackie Condon. Special settings and the unusual impromptu antics of the "Gang" will add to the first appearance of this famous aggregation which Harry Weaver is presenting in vaudeville for the first time. The whole "Gang" has consented to remain after each matinee and hold an informal reception for all the children in the Orpheum audience—so each kiddie that attends the Orpheum next week will have a chance to meet the famous "Our Gang" in person. Other outstanding features on the new bill are Neville Flesoon, the noted musical comedy author, and Miss Bobby Folsom, the musical comedy favorite, in "The Song Painter"; Eddie Miller and Frank J. Corbett in "Brothers in Harmony"; and Lillian Fitzgerald with Joe Daly. The Six Reillys, America's foremost juvenile tap-dancers, will be another feature to delight the children as well as the grown-ups. Three other Orpheum Circuit feature attractions will complete the new bill.

UTAH PIONEER DAY

Saturday, July 23, Ocean Park will welcome hosts of former residents of the great state of Utah, celebrating their great holiday, Pioneer Day. Honoring that sturdy band of pioneers, who on July 22, 1847, after braving the perils of the trackless plains, constantly fearing the attacks of hostile Indians, suffering the pangs of hunger and thirst, entered the great Salt Lake Valley, will gather not only former Utahans, but countless numbers from all other mountain states.

'Stark Love' Thrills of Backwoods Lore at Metropolitan

"Stark Love," an amazing tale of backwoods and mountain life in North Carolina, the most unusual photoplay yet released by Paramount, is the screen attraction at the Metropolitan theatre, Hill at Sixth streets, Los Angeles, for the week starting Thursday, July 21.

Every role in this astounding picture is taken by native mountaineers and farmers of the Great Smoky Mountain region. Fighting prejudice and suspicion of the primitive folk Karl Brown, the producer, was forced often to photograph his characters separately and later piece the two scenes together.

By recording in the moving picture camera the daily lives of these people, he emerged a year later with the strangest drama of love and elemental strife ever seen on the screen. "Stark Love" is a true picturization of a section of our American mountains where women do all the work, are actually "slaves"—and the rest of the United States is referred to as "The Outside".

Yet the film is a stirring and thrilling drama of the home life and loves of those who live far from the great cities—enacted by themselves.



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